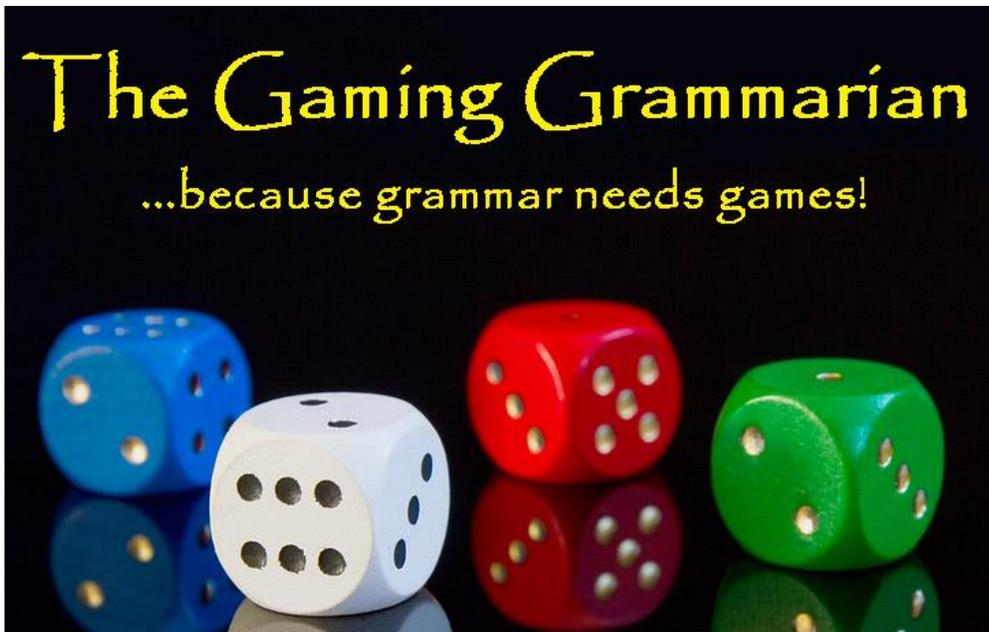


Six Quick and Two Important Adaptations For EL Learners

1. Speak slowly and have longer wait times-- ELLs do not hear things the same way we do. Our ears are trained to pick up on certain sounds and speech patterns, this is why we have trouble understanding accented English. Also, newer learners have to process everything multiple times—first in English, then in their first language, and then back into English for response. Give them extra time to accomplish all of this thinking.
2. Enunciate—Since ELLs’ ears are not trained to hear the sounds of English it is more difficult for them to hear the vowel sounds, word breaks, and other finer points of the language. Think of an actor: they have to over enunciate to make their speech clear for large audiences, this same principle is helpful for ELs to hear the syllables, multiple letters, and other idiosyncrasies of the English language.
3. Repeat, repeat, repeat—As teachers we know the value of repetition. Research shows that it takes an average of ten separate meetings of a new word *in context* for us to truly learn it and its usage. This is a minimum for ELLs and is increased for words that are “challenging” such as homonyms, idioms, and abstract terms that have changed meaning through the years.
4. Visuals—If you can visualize it, do, and in as many contexts as possible. Pictures are key--it is not unusual for an ELL to be completely lost with very easy vocabulary or concepts but as soon as they see a picture to have a complete change and exclaim in their first language a translation or explanation.
5. Subtitles—When you show a video, turn on the English subtitles. This not only helps when the speaking gets going too fast for your ELLs, it provides a visual support for the language. This visual support helps them improve their reading and better segment sounds into individual words.
6. Kinesthetic Methods—The more senses involved the greater the learning is teaching 101. This is magnified for ELLs because the auditory methods and written text (often the foundation of our visual methods after kindergarten) are all but useless for them, especially at the beginning.
7. Read to them—We know that all children benefit from being read to. Research is now telling us that ELLs not only need to be read to more than non-language learners, but as much as six times more.
8. Scaffold and scaffold again—Prior knowledge is absolutely essential. An ideal lesson should present a new concept or new vocabulary, never both. If both are required the lesson will take two to three times longer to properly convey and may never be fully conveyed at this time. The vast majority of ELLs do have age-appropriate knowledge, they just need the English words to express it.



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